

Remarks

This amendment is in response to the Office Action of December 1, 2005.

A Request for a Two Month Extension of Time from March 1, 2006 to May 1, 2006 is being filed simultaneously with the Response to the Office Action, along with the appropriate filing fees.

In the Drawings section of the Office Action, certain objections were raised with respect to the drawings. Figure 11 has been revised in accordance with Examiner's suggestion by renumbering the actuator as "248". The plate in Figure 14 has been renumbered "254". With these changes, acceptance of the drawings is requested.

In the Specifications section, certain objections were made to the disclosure. Regarding page 1, the Related Application section has been revised to correct the noted filing date error, and the issued patent number added. Regarding page 14, Examiner's suggestions have been incorporated. Regarding pages 15 and 16, the hold down plate has been renumbered to "254". With these changes, acceptance of the specification is requested.

In the Claims Objections section, objections were raised regarding noted informalities, and revisions thereto suggested. The applicable claims have been revised in accordance with Examiner's suggestions, and the objections are thus thought to be overcome.

In the Claims Rejections section, certain rejections under 35 USC 112 were made to noted claims, and correcting revisions thereto suggested. The noted claims have been revised in accordance with Examiner's suggestions, and the rejections are thus thought to be overcome.

In the Double Patenting section, claims 1-5, 8-9, and 12-14 were rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting. A Terminal Disclaimer is filed herewith thereby overcoming such rejections. Notification of allowance of the noted claims is requested.

In the claims rejection section under 35 USC 102, claims 11, 15 and 16 were rejected over the Phillips and Penland references. Claims 11 and 15 have been cancelled.

Reconsideration of the rejection of claim 16 is requested. In Figure 2 of Penland, only a two ply mat is illustrated, and assembly by bolts is suggested as one method of assembly. In column 5 wherein an additional layer is suggested, the extra layer would more likely be attached by subsequent operations. As such, any prior bolt constructions would interfere with the subsequent layer. In any event, there is no teaching suggestion that the mat be disassembled and bolts inserted through all three layers. The prevailing construction is shown in Figure 1. Therein, the layer 12 is assembled to the layer 10. The top layer 14 is assembled separately as demonstrated by the numerous two ply intersections. As to the specific claim recitations, there are no specific enabling teachings in Penland of the specific recitations in claim 16.

Regarding Phillips, while it is suggested that bolts may be an assembly technique along with nailing, the drawings and description are silent as to where and how such fastening is to take place. The drawings do not indicate any fastening locations, rendering speculative whether the same take place at all locations and if so through all three layers as claimed.

As to both the Penland and Phillips references, the manifestly lacking enabling is found only by hindsight recourse to Applicant's disclosure. With particular reference to claim 16, there is no basis for through holes formed

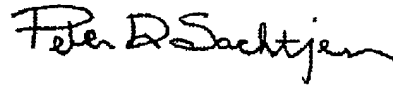
through said timbers at said intersecting surfaces. There is no basis for the heads of the bolts engaging the upper surface of said timbers, nor nuts engaging the lower surface of said timbers. Accordingly, Applicant submits that claim 16 is allowable over these references.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that claims 1-10, 12-14 and 16 are patentable and allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,

MILLS LAW FIRM PLLC



Peter D. Sachtjen, Reg. No. 24,619

Mills Law Firm, PLLC
Post Office Box 1245
Cary, NC 27512
Telephone: (919) 462-3036
Facsimile: (919) 462-3041
Attorney Direct Line: (252) 413-0475